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HOWARD AND THE PAPARAZZI: PAINTING PENAL REFORM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Richard W. Ireland*

John Howard's celebrity as a penal reformer is probably greater than that of any other single individual. Yet Howard was not the first to recognize the problems of the pre-Reform English Gaols. How did he attract and maintain such celebrity? This paper explores Howard's relationship with the artistic circles of his own day and the imagery which was employed in the representation of his work. That relationship was one of strange tensions for whilst a pictorial propaganda contributed to his transcendent fame he deliberately, almost eccentrically, sought to avoid its exponents. The thought of the saintly Howard fleeing from artists besieging him on his doorstep and in the streets is curiously reminiscent of the experience of celebrity in our own day.

In March 1998, an ink drawing by George Romney was sold at Agnew's for £17,500. In the catalogue it bore the title *Torment – Scene in a Lazaretto* and that title recalls a number of other scenes by Romney executed in the 1790s, many of which are held in the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge.¹ The picture, whatever it may in reality depict,² attracted my attention and not simply because of its powerful, dramatic composition showing three figures bent over another prostrate upon a rock. It was the word 'Lazaretto' which particularly interested me, suggesting implicitly as other drawings in the Fitzwilliam depict explicitly, the work of the great eighteenth century penal reformer John Howard. Yet Howard's relationship with the visual artists of his time was an ambiguous one. On the one hand he sought to avoid their attentions in life, whilst on the other an understanding of the significance of the representation of Howard, which one penal historian has likened to religious iconography,³ will shed light on both the impact of Howard's achievement and the machinery of the transmission of his legend after his death. These themes will be explored in this paper.

A few brief biographical details will suffice to introduce Howard, still probably the most celebrated individual actor in prison history. Born in Enfield in the year 1726, the son of an upholsterer and a mother who died in his infancy, Howard was appointed as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1773. In that capacity he had inspected the gaols of the county, and alarmed by what he saw, he undertook a general survey of penal provision in England and Wales which was published in 1777. It revealed a miscellany of unsatisfactory conditions and prisoners confined for no other reason but a failure to pay the fees for their own incarceration to the unsalaried gaolers. The inquiry thereafter developed into a vocation. As part of his continuous travelling to survey the conditions in a multiplicity of institutions, at home and abroad, Howard decided in 1785 to visit the lazarettos he had noted on earlier European travels: "It....struck me that

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1 See Patricia Jaffe *Drawings by George Romney in the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1977), no. 94 *et seq.*

2 Andrew Wyld at Agnew's tells me that he now thinks the drawing to be of Prometheus.

3 *Infra*, note 32.

establishments, effectual for the most infectious of all diseases, must afford many useful hints for guarding against the propagation of contagious distempers in general".⁴ In February 1789 the account of this trip was published. He died, still engaged in his investigations, in Kherson, Ukraine in 1790 and was buried there.

That Howard's efforts were a supreme personal endeavour was a fact seized upon both by his contemporaries and by historians. Howard remains a most distinctive individual – stubborn, reckless of his own safety, outspoken, vegetarian – whose character cannot be seen simply as coldly reflecting the depersonalised material conditions of his age. It would be unwise to attempt to pronounce upon his psychology at a distance of two hundred years (Ignatieff rightly cautions that the source of Howard's religious anxiety is hard to understand, "twentieth century canons of introspection being defined more by Sigmund Freud than John Bunyan"⁵) yet elements of compulsiveness and self-loathing seem difficult to ignore in his own writing. If there was such a being as a typical eighteenth century man then Howard, I think, could not take that title.

Certainly however there were circumstances in the last quarter of the eighteenth century which contributed to both the methodology of Howard's work and to the success of the reception of his ideas. In his perambulations of Europe and the British Isles, taking notes and making sketches, Howard seems like one engaged in curiously slanted versions of the typically eighteenth century Grand Tour and Tour of Britain (which latter might provide "an alternative or complementary educational experience"⁶ to the former). For the Grand Tourist acute observation rather than a simple holiday was the goal: "All the eighteenth-century travellers had in common a fresh, clear-eyed determination to look at the new lands they saw unfolding before them, and to describe what they saw with as much precision as possible".⁷

Nor were tours solely concerned with art. The agronomist Arthur Young toured in Britain and beyond and had published three *Tours* by 1771, the tone of which is not unfamiliar to one who has read Howard's work.⁸ Moreover the line between art and science becomes blurred in the development of the conception of the Picturesque in this period.⁹ Howard's contemporaries certainly remarked on the singularity (but also by implication the common cultural milieu) of Howard as Grand Tourist. Burke, in a speech at the Bristol election of 1780 remarked of him:

He has visited all Europe, – not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art; not to collect medals or to collate manuscripts: but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; and to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries.¹⁰

4 J. Howard *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe with Various Papers Relative to the Plague together with Further Observations on some Foreign Prisons and Hospitals and Additional Remarks on the Present State of those in Great Britain and Ireland* (Warrington, 1789), p. 1.

5 M. Ignatieff *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (London, 1978) p. 51. Ignatieff also (pp. 49-50) considers the importance of Nonconformist religion both in Howard himself and in his circle of friends. For an interesting example of the liberal reform tradition, to which Howard both belonged and contributed see N. McKendrick 'Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline' (1961) IV *The Historical Journal* pp. 30-55, and note especially the reference to Howard at p. 50.

6 I. Bignamini in A. Wilton and I. Bignamini *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996) p. 32.

7 C. De Seta in *ibid.*, p. 18.

8 See G.E. Mingay (ed.) *Arthur Young and his Times* (London, 1975), particularly, for example pp. 118 *et seq.*, J. Ingamells in Wilton and Bignamini *Grand Tour*, p. 25.

9 De Seta, *loc.cit.*, pp. 15-16. It is interesting too to reflect upon Kant's philosophical discussion in the late eighteenth century of the relationship between the moral and the aesthetic, see, for example D. Preziosi *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 66, 93.

10 As quoted in Field *Life of Howard* (London, n.d.), p. 205.

The poet Cowper praised Howard's enterprise similarly:

To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach!¹¹

If Howard's methodology was of its time, its reception too was assisted by events beyond his home at Cardington. Count Cesare Beccaria's plea for proportionality and reason in criminal punishment *Dei Delitti et delle Pene* was first published in 1764 and translated into English in 1767 (a copy was given by the author's wife to the Duke of York whilst he was on the Grand Tour). In 1775 the American Revolution, by interrupting – until 1787 when Australia began to be used for the same purpose – the flow of transported offenders outside the jurisdiction, focused attention upon forms of 'secondary' punishment (that is those which fell short of execution). In 1777 the fashionable cleric, poet and philanthropist Dr Dodd was executed despite great support, notably that of Dr Johnson, and popular (perhaps more accurately we should say fashionable) opinion was focussed upon the deficiencies of the existing penal system.¹² Yet Howard, the 'Consummate Philanthropist', remains a remarkable individual, even as we recognise the inevitable influence of his cultural and temporal location. He observed, counted and measured: he introduced to the practice of punishment the methodology of empirical science. Michael Ignatieff pointed out that Howard was not the first to recognise abuses within the gaols, and observes: "The originality of Howard's indictment lies in its 'scientific', not in its moral character. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1756 and author of several scientific papers on climatic variations in Bedfordshire, Howard was one of the first philanthropists to attempt a systematic statistical description of a social problem".¹³

When then of art as it relates to this story? The first point to be made is that Howard himself was utterly opposed, despite his undoubted celebrity, to having his portrait painted. "I have a most unconquerable aversion" he is reported to have told a contemporary "and ever had, to have public exhibitions made of me; insomuch that I protest to you it has cost me a great deal of trouble, and some money, to make his insignificant form and ugly face escape a pack of draughtsmen, painters etc, that are lying in wait for me".¹⁴

Lie in wait the painters did, and, prefiguring the experience of secular saints of our own day, Howard's public appearances saw him encountering 'lurking artists' at his door, and having to hide in hackney coaches to evade them, or distort his features to frustrate them. When, in 1786, with Howard out of the country, a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* by 'Anglus' suggested a monument to Howard, its execution (though Howard himself consistently and ultimately successfully opposed the plan) encountered an unexpected difficulty. "A bust, or picture of him," wrote 'Anglus' "for a sculptor to work from, can, without doubt, be supplied by some friend."¹⁵ The existence of any such model was soon being doubted however and the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was obliged to concede that "At worst... an allegorical design and monumental eulogy will of course supply the deficiency of a portrait".¹⁶ A correspondent to that publication urged:

11 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 270.

12 For Dodd see Cooke's edition of Dodd's *Thoughts in Prison* (London, 1796?), for the importance of the case see L. Radzinowicz *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750* vol. 1 (London, 1948), ch. 14. For a re-appraisal see V. Gattrell *The Hanging Tree* (Oxford, 1996) pp. 292-4.

13 Ignatieff *Just Measure of Pain* p. 52.

14 See J. Field (ed.) *Correspondence of John Howard* (London, 1855), p. 137.

15 *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1786, p. 360.

16 *Ibid.*, July 1786, p. 537.

On his return, a whole-length portrait to be taken of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds and placed in the dinner-room of the Sessions-house at the Old-Bailey. From this picture a metzotinto and engraving may be taken, that it may be in the power of every one, who thinks highly of his zeal and benevolence, to have in their closets, at no great expence, a representation of a man who has deserved so greatly of humanity.¹⁷

Pictures of Howard do appear to have been made around this time. A painting of Howard visiting prisoners by Francis Wheatley (to be discussed shortly) has been dated to 1787, whilst the first portrait by Mather Brown is known from an engraving of 1789. I regard it as highly improbable that Howard consented to sit formally for either of these two latter pictures.¹⁸ Certainly we know that some of the likenesses were unauthorised. In August 1790 the *Gentleman's Magazine* published a version of a drawing it had been sent "which," wrote its correspondent "I pledge myself to you, was drawn from the life (unknown to Mr Howard) while at my house, by a young but ingenious artist".¹⁹ An edition of a biography of Howard published in America in 1794 records:

Mr Howard has so much contempt for worldly honors that he would never sit to any painter whatever, and this has given rise to the opinion that there is no correct likeness of him. In this report, however, the public seems to be under a mistake. An ingenious and respectable artist, Mr T. Holloway [*sic*], whose talents are justly admired, had an opportunity of being in company with Mr Howard in a public place where a sketch of his features might be stolen. The temptation was too great to be resisted. An accurate sketch was made, and an engraving, executed from it accompanies this life, and will afford a very just idea of the features of this great good man.²⁰

One of those who sought to paint Howard was the celebrated portraitist George Romney and it was in default of permission to do so that the 'Lazaretto' scenes mentioned at the outset of this article were executed. As one commentator remarked "The compositions probably do not illustrate particular incidents, but are generalized pictures of the miseries of pestilence ridden lazarettos".²¹

I do not know when the titles became affixed to the works and am reluctant to trespass into the territory of others' expertise, but in truth at least some of the scenes, in which on at least one occasion a chained figure is depicted,²² seem more immediately to suggest to me prisons than lazarettos. Romney's biographer Chamberlain, writing in 1910, explicitly records that Howard "suggested several incidents of human misery, seen during his visitations to foreign prisons, which he thought might be suited to the artist's pencil".²³ He implies that this conversation took place in 1780 – five years before Howard's Lazaretto tour. Lazarettos moreover as described by Howard in his *Guide to the Principal Lazarettos of Europe* were not plague pits but, on the

17 *Ibid.*, September 1786, p. 727.

18 D. Evans in *Mather Brown: Early American Artist in England* suggests the portrait was probably done "from sketches....without a formal sitting" (p. 89). The author links the marketing of engravings of this portrait to the agitation for "a sculpture", *sed quare*, the plan for the statue seems to have been abandoned in 1787, though clearly the publishers sought explicitly to appeal to the same audience (*ibid.* p. 90, *Field Life of Howard* pp. 246-7, *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1787 p. 464). The portrait by the same artist in the National Portrait Gallery is a later one, probably from 1789/90. The assistance of Kai Kin Yung of the National Portrait Gallery on this point is gratefully acknowledged.

19 *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1790, pp. 684-5. The image was not apparently universally admired: "Several of your readers are sorry you have inserted in your Miscellany a portrait of Mr Howard (which having no character but of an idiot, must have been sent as a burlesque)", *Ibid.*, September 1790, p. 795.

20 Quoted in L. Baumgartner *John Howard 1726-1790 Hospital and Prison Reformer: A Bibliography* (Baltimore, 1939), p. 8, note. The artist referred to is presumably Thomas Holloway.

21 Jaffe *Drawings*, p. 58.

22 Jaffe *Catalogue*, no. 98.

23 A. Chamberlain *George Romney* (New York, 1971, reprinting a work of 1910) p. 99.

whole, well ordered quarantine hospitals, the creation of one of which Howard was urging for England, in which persons and goods arriving from the Eastern trade routes were isolated for a set period. Howard's own accommodation when confined in such an institution by his own volition was certainly less than pleasant – he undertook to limewash the walls himself – but hardly approximated to the *grand guignol* of Romney's sketches. 'Lazaretto' however is a word suggestive, I think, of both dark antiquity and an alien otherness. It is perhaps appropriate that, whatever their precise imaginative aetiology, the word is applied to Romney's sketches, for Howard in his efforts at reform, is notably depicted in the late eighteenth century as both a bringer of light and as a specifically English hero.

It is the work of the poet William Hayley, 'The Bard of Eartham' that both themes are perhaps most clearly exemplified. Hayley had a circle of noted contacts and the influence which he exerted over Romney was considerable. In his *Essay on Painting in Two Epistles to Mr Romney*, Hayley commended the depiction of nationalistic themes:

Oh! here let painting, as of old in GREECE
With patriot passions warm the finish'd piece;
Let BRITAIN, happy in a gen'rous race,
Of manly spirit, and of female Grace,
Let this frank Parent with fond eyes explore,
Some just memorials of the line she bore,
In tints immortal to her view recall
Her dearest Offspring on the storied Wall.²⁴

Such patriotic rhetoric is echoed in the letters supporting the erection of a monument to Howard.²⁵ It is, in truth, a rather curious stance to have adopted. Howard, like many a Grand Tourist before him, brought home from his travels evidence of continental sophistication. The examples of the Maison de Force at Ghent and the lazaretto system, for instance, had been specifically invoked in his critique of domestic provision, and an early biographer of Howard remarked that on returning to Dover from his tour of 1775 "his estimate of the light he had obtained upon the subject of his research was enhanced by the dark contrast at once presented".²⁶ Yet as part of his public apotheosis Howard's image could be manipulated more chauvinistically by others. He becomes a mobile beacon, emitting his own light constantly in conditions and locations which increasingly merge together as uniformly dark. This imagery of light, which occurs also in the monument correspondence,²⁷ is I think interesting and merits further discussion.

Again, if we turn to Hayley we find his *Ode Inscribed to John Howard* (which in the 1781 edition I used in researching this paper was bound together with the *Epistles to Mr Romney*. Romney also produced the design engraved to accompany the *Ode to Howard*) we discover an abundance of references to Howard as a bringer of light:

But whence those sudden sacred beams?
Oppression drops his iron rod!
And all the bright'ning dungeon seems
To speak the presence of a God.

24 W. Hayley *An Essay on Painting in Two Epistles To Mr Romney* (London, 1781), II, lines 417 *et seq.*, p. 49.

25 See *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1786 p. 485 (...it is an honour to the isle of Britain, that such a speck as it is should have produced SUCH A MAN"). August 1786, p. 627 ("I think the British nation is very properly consulting its own honour, by perpetuating that of Mr Howard").

26 Field *Life of Howard*, p. 85.

27 See *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1786, p. 360 ("That he was not seized [while abroad] is undoubtedly owing to the light diffused"), June 1786 p. 447.

Philanthropy's descending ray.
 Diffuses unexpected day!
 Loveliest of angels! – at her side
 Her favourite votary stands; – her English pride,
 Thro' Horror's mansions led by this celestial guide.²⁸

Hayley also hit upon the idea of having the statue of Howard for the proposed memorial holding a lamp, in order that it might shed a "splendid and perpetual light".²⁹ Howard himself acknowledged a similar trope in one of his letters.³⁰

The imagery of light may seem obvious to us in such a context. Prisons were often physically dark (although ventilation seems to have occupied Howard's own concern rather than light). The light of Christianity, the 'Light of the World' is clearly also involved. Philip Rawlings, commenting upon the image which was apparently one by Francis Wheatley painted in 1787,³¹ the year in which the call for images of Howard was being made (which has shafts of light illuminating the cell from over Howard's shoulder), states that it "reminds the viewer of countless similar paintings of Christ".³² Certainly such superhuman suggestions are supported by some of the laudatory rhetoric of Howard's own day. Horace Walpole at different points in his correspondence uses the words 'divine',³³ 'apostle'³⁴ and 'angelic'³⁵ as descriptive of Howard. Erasmus Darwin, in a striking passage in his remarkable poem *The Botanic Garden* is similarly immoderate in his admiration:

– The Spirits of the Good, who bend from high
 Wide o'er these earthly scenes their partial eye,
 When first, array'd in VIRTUE'S purest robe
 They saw her HOWARD traversing the globe;
 Saw round his brows her sun-like glory blaze
 In arrowy circles of unwearied rays;
 Mistook a Mortal for an Angel-Guest,
 And ask'd what Seraph-foot the earth imprest.
 – Onward he moves! – Disease and Death retire,
 And murmuring Demons hate him, and admire.³⁶

Yet light is emblematic not only of Christianity but also of knowledge triumphing over ignorance in a more general, more secular sense. Darwin's poem was a scientific text and I suspect

28 W. Hayley *Ode Inscribed to John Howard Esq., FRS, Author of "The State of English and Foreign Prisons"*. The work was written in 1779. In the 1781 edition used here the lines are found at p. 4.

29 See M. Bishop *Blake's Hayley* (London, 1951) p. 104. Note the words of one of the proponents of the monument, Dr Lettison, in a letter to John Nichols, quoted in J. Stoughton *Howard the Philanthropist and his Friends* (London, 1884), p. 297: "Virtue, whether shining in the public works of life, or emitting the soft rays of human benevolence in the dungeons of misery, will ever obtain its own reward beyond all the powers of sculpture; but to exhibit that evidence to the public, to excite emulation in virtuous pursuits, and to induce spectators to go and do likewise, nothing seems more conducive than a monument to Howard.". Howard's own position regarding the monument was firm: "...to erecting a monument, permit me in the most fixed and unequivocal manner to declare my repugnancy to such a design, and that the execution of it will be a punishment to me..." (letter quoted in Field *Life of Howard* p. 243, cf. Field *Correspondence* p. 135).

30 Field *Life of Howard* p. 262.

31 The picture is in a private collection. The identification of the work, and its dating, I owe to Sheila O'Connell of the British Museum which holds a print after the painting made three years later by James Hogg.

32 P. Rawlings in C. Harding, B. Hines, R. Ireland, P. Rawlings *Imprisonment in England and Wales: A Concise History* (Beckenham, 1985), p. 113.

33 W. Lewis (ed.) *Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (Oxford, 1937-83), vol. 12, pp. 161-2.

34 *Ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 216.

35 *Ibid.*, vol. 39, p. 428.

36 E. Darwin *The Botanic Garden Part II* (Dublin, 4th edn., 1796) Vol. II, lines 463 *et seq.*

that within the artistic circles members of which pursued Howard the light of science was a powerful image. It is interesting to note that both Hayley (who is his *Ode to Howard* had observed "Sweet is the joy when Science flings her light on philosophic thought"³⁷) and Romney were friends of Joseph Wright of Derby, indeed Wright had been yet another recipient of a dire and sycophantic laudatory ode by Hayley. It was Wright, of course, who had used his mastery of representation of hidden light sources to make such dramatic interpretations of scientific exposition as *A Philosopher giving that Lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the Sun* (1766) and *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768, and suggestive also perhaps of the contemporary interest in the mechanics of respiration and mortality which recall Howard's persistent theme of ventilation³⁸). Romney himself executed a painting of Isaac Newton in 1794 demonstrating the spectrum of light with a prism.³⁹ Light then can suggest both science and religion, and both of these forces may also be mingled in the vocabulary of purification, which Howard, with his bible in one hand, and bucket of lime-wash in the other, might be seen to exemplify.⁴⁰

Perhaps observation is legitimate at this point. We have noted that Romney's pre-reform prison scenes are imaginary rather than documentary. So too were the eighteenth century's most magnificent and enduring images of prison – the *Carceri* of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. These architectural and psychological nightmares were engraved in their first state in the 1740s and reissued with extra plates and an overall darkening of tone in the 1760s. Piranesi's work was popular in England. I do not know if Romney knew Piranesi's prison scenes but such knowledge is not improbable. Fuseli, whom Romney knew in Rome when he stayed there in the 1770s certainly seems to have been aware of Piranesi,⁴¹ and the Gothic novelist Beckford, a purchaser of Romney's work, certainly knew the engravings, reporting his recollection of them when he viewed the Bridge of Sighs in 1780.⁴² Piranesi's influence has indeed been detected in the text of the seminal Gothic novel, Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* from as early as 1765.⁴³ Piranesi's work, like the word 'Lazaretto' in later years, suggested perhaps the dark, foreign cruelty and absolutism which Howard's English scientific light was to banish from domestic shores in reality, leaving it to persist, in antithesis, only in a popular fictional genre.

After Howard's death he was no longer able to exert the degree of control over the dissemination of his image which he had attempted in life. In Kherson two post-mortem plaster casts are reputed to have been taken of his features on the instruction of Prince Potemkin.⁴⁴ A memorial was sculpted by John Bacon in St Paul's Cathedral and opened to public view in February

37 Hayley *Ode to Howard*, p. 17.

38 *Infra*, note 40.

39 Interesting in this respect is the exemplification in a poem which appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October 1786, p. 824, of Art by Shakespeare, Science by Newton and Virtue by Howard, following an earlier association of this trilogy by a correspondent in *ibid.*, August 1786, p. 627.

40 Howard's links with contemporary medical theory and practice are important but cannot be discussed here, see M. de Lacy *Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850* (Manchester, 1986) pp. 82-94.

41 See P. Tomory *The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli* (London, 1972), pp. 73, 96 and see also the interesting comments on the artist's *The Escapee* (c.1779) at pp. 84-7.

42 "I shuddered whilst passing below; and believe it is not without cause, this structure is named *Ponte dei Sospiri*. Horrors and dismal prospects haunted my fancy on my return. I could not dine in peace, so strongly was my imagination affected; but snatching my pencil, I drew chasms and subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi", quoted in J. Wilton-Ely *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (London, 1978), p. 89.

43 For Piranesi's influence on the fiction of Walpole and Beckford see M. Praz in P. Fairclough (ed.) *Three Gothic Novels* (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 16-20.

44 Recorded in Aikin's biography of 1792, see Baumgartner *Bibliography*, p. 8, note.

1796. In this statue Howard, in death becomes not English but Roman – a bizarre inversion.⁴⁵ Howard seems nonetheless to have continued his translation to secular sainthood – biographies of him seen as improving texts and the surviving visual representations may be seen in this context – memorials to a man who rejected them in his life. As Ignatieff remarks “he became the symbol of the philanthropic vocation, canonised by a middle class seeking representations of its best virtues”.⁴⁶

Reasons for Howard’s assuming such a place in the imagination have been suggested elsewhere. I have tried to show here that an investigation of the pictorial and literary sources of his age show Howard to be a man whose work was celebrated by poets and painters to an extent which might surprise the modern reader. In its turn that aspect of his celebrity may have sustained his iconic status where other names, Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, Jonas Hanway⁴⁷ and others, who also played significant roles in penal reform are now largely unknown except by specialists in penal history. But the ‘Enlightenment’ and its promise were broad cultural movements and Howard, and the resonances which his image could invoke – darkness, old neglect, miasma, alien despotism overcome by light, new observation, medicine and an English hero – should be seen in that perspective.

45 Apparently when one design for a monument by Bacon was submitted an objection was raised on the ground that there were two figures, Howard and a prisoner he was raising from the ground, whilst the memorial to Dr Johnson had only one. Joshua Reynolds stated that unless it were changed a new place would have to be found for it. Samuel Whitbread replied that “whatever alteration is made for Dr Johnson’s monument it is my sincere wish that the place appointed for Howard’s may not be altered” (Field *Howard’s Letters* p.206). The sculpture was accordingly re-designed, but a bas-relief frieze added to remedy the deficiency, see Bacon’s discussion in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, March 1796 p. 180.

46 Ignatieff *Just Measure of Pain*, p. 57.

47 It is interesting to note that Hanway, social reformer and inventor of the umbrella, is praised in the same terms as Howard in Horace Walpole’s letters, see references *supra*, notes 30 and 31, and in correspondence to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* at the time of the Howard memorial debate, see September 1786 pp. 724, 726, but failed to achieve a similar celebrity.